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FROM ACTING A/S ANNA BORG TO AMBASSADORS, DCM'S, ECON
COUNSELORS, PAOS, AND AG COUNSELORS

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TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [TBIO](#) [KPAO](#)
SUBJECT: FY 2010 BIOTECHNOLOGY OUTREACH STRATEGY AND
DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

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¶1. (U) Summary. Agricultural biotechnology has great potential to help address the challenges of food insecurity and mitigate climate change. To realize this potential, and to protect the interests of U.S. farmers and exporters, we seek to promote understanding of the technology and encourage the adoption of fair, transparent, and science-based policies and practices in other countries. This cable outlines key elements of our current biotech strategy as well as some of the tools and resources (including EEB's biotech outreach funds) available to help posts pursue an active biotech agenda in support of this strategy and encourages the various sections and agencies in your missions to work together as they pursue our shared goals on this issue. I encourage missions to prepare thoughtful, interagency coordinated proposals for use of this year's EEB biotech outreach funds (see paragraphs 10-16 for instructions on submitting proposals). The deadline for these proposals is January 15, 2010; however we may begin allocating EEB biotech outreach funds before the deadline, as necessary. End Summary.

Biotech Outreach Objectives for 2010

¶2. (U) Our biotech outreach objectives for 2010 are to increase access to, and markets for, biotech as a means to help address the underlying causes of the food crisis, and to promote agricultural technology's role in mitigating climate change and increasing biofuel production. We will pursue these objectives by:

- Encouraging science and technology to play crucial roles in unleashing additional agricultural productivity, particularly in the developing world. Many international organizations have called for a second Green Revolution in Africa, and biotechnology will be a central part of that effort. Biotechnology is being used to increase crop yields and enhance the ability of food crops to sustain climate shocks.
- Publicizing the fact that agricultural biotechnology can help address the food crisis and serve as a development tool by increasing food productivity, reducing crop input costs, and helping to alleviate poverty.
- Recognizing the role biotechnology can play in mitigating climate change by increasing the efficiency of land already in production and by increasing adoption of agricultural practices such as low till agriculture that trap carbon in the soil.
- Reinforcing the environmental gains from decreased

insecticide use, reduced soil erosion, and increased plant efficiency, stressing the potential for improved nutrition and disease prevention, and encouraging the development and commercialization of ag-biotech products that meet the unique needs of developing nations.

-- Encouraging countries to abide by global trading rules and accept science-based evaluation of food production methods. The U.S. will continue its effort to open markets and advocate responsible regulation. We will continue to seek full EU compliance with the 2006 WTO ruling against the EU de facto moratorium on approving agricultural biotechnology products.

-- Taking full advantage of the WTO biotech ruling by explaining the significance of the case, particularly to developing countries, and by stressing the global scientific consensus on the safety of ag-biotech products noted by the final WTO panel decision. Some countries, especially in the developing world, lack the opportunity to utilize advanced crop technology due to concerns that the EU will not accept their agricultural exports if produced with the aid of biotechnology. The U.S. should support developing countries that seek access to biotechnology, and reaffirm the WTO's 2006 panel ruling on this issue.

-- Ensuring that activities taken pursuant to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Codex

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Alimentarius are in line with those countries' obligations under international trade agreements.

-- Promoting the understanding that ag-biotech contributes to production of biofuels through increased yields and improved feedstocks, and helps ensure food security.

Strategy and Resources

¶3. (U) We urge posts to pay particular attention to advancing this strategy with countries that have key biotech legislation pending or are at a cross-roads on the technology, those that provide opportunities for active engagement on ag biotech to address food production and mitigate climate change, and those that are active players in international fora where biotechnology issues are discussed (e.g., CODEX Alimentarius and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety).

¶4. (U) The Department works with a host of other USG agencies, international organizations, NGOs and industry to promote understanding and acceptance of biotechnology as well as new initiatives related to this technology. Within the State Department, the Agriculture and Biotech Trade Affairs Division (EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT) takes primary responsibility for ag-biotech issues. EEB has available biotech outreach funds that can be allocated to posts to further ag-biotech policy and promote acceptance of the technology. These funds are administered by EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT with the assistance of EEB/EX. Please see sections 10-16 for more information.

¶5. (U) Other USG agencies, such as USDA and USAID, have resources to help posts support USG biotech policy. Close collaboration among all relevant embassy sections and agencies is key to ensuring that posts fully exploit the range of available USG biotech resources. Many posts establish ag-biotech working groups to put together successful ag-biotech advocacy programs. In order to facilitate effective

coordination between EEB and the field on ag-biotech issues, posts should forward points of contact for ag-biotech issues to EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT, Marcella Szymanski and Jack Bobo.

¶6. (U) Posts are encouraged to utilize the services of the Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP). Funds are available through EEB's Biotech Outreach Program to fund IIP Speaker Programs for Biotechnology. (Note: Posts wishing to work with IIP in the recruitment of speakers and the administration of speaker programs must conform with the policies and guidelines of IIP. If IIP is to be involved, then speakers must be U.S. citizens, and that they must be offered an honorarium of \$200 per day (excepting USG employees) for each day of the program, and must be offered business class seating if the travel exceeds 14 hours' duration. It is suggested that posts work closely with Public Affairs Sections during the development and implementation of such programs, as the PA sections are familiar with IIP program requirements, procedures and request submission formats. All IIP program requests MUST/MUST go through PA.)

¶7. (U) Posts are encouraged to use ECA's International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) by including ag-biotech participants---under their regular allotments--in the program. For example, visits to U.S. farms where biotech crops are being cultivated, as well as discussions with U.S. farmers, have proven to be effective ways of dispelling concerns about biotech on the part of foreign visitors. Posts should consider adding a biotech component to International Visitor programs for a wide range of opinion leaders, not just biotech specialists.

¶8. (U) Specially designed biotech Voluntary Visitors projects involving host government officials, industry leaders, and academics might also be considered. The Foreign Press Center could arrange biotech reporting tours for U.S.- based foreign media and/or arrange visits by foreign media to the U.S. PAO's should coordinate these efforts directly with the relevant PA and ECA offices, although EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT would appreciate receiving info copies of proposals and

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nominations, and stands ready to assist ECA and posts with programming efforts.

¶9. (U) EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT staff are available as appropriate to advocate in host capitals, troubleshoot problematic legislation, and participate as public speakers on ag-biotech. In particular, this is the key role of the State Department's Senior Advisor for Biotechnology, Jack Bobo.

EEB'S BIOTECH OUTREACH FUNDS FOR FY 2009

¶10. (U) The Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Affairs (EEB) has received funding in each of the last seven fiscal years for ag-biotech outreach projects. Although the full level of funding for fiscal year 2010 is not yet certain, EEB encourages embassies and their consulates to propose projects such as speaker programs, conferences, workshops and seminars to take advantage of these funds to promote the acceptance of ag-biotech.

¶11. (U) Funds are targeted towards public outreach to develop support for USG trade and development policy positions on biotechnology. Projects should aim to provide accurate information on the benefits of biotechnology to policymakers and consumers in other

countries and to encourage the adoption of science-based regulatory systems. In light of discussions with Congressional staff, funds should be used to create support for USG positions in regions outside the European Union (EU) or to limit the influence of EU negative views on biotechnology. We do, however, consider on a case-by-case basis, and have provided funding for, proposals from EUR posts that are consistent with our overall strategy.

¶12. (U) Acceptance and receipt of funds are contingent on posts' agreeing to provide, within one month of completion of the project, a report including the following elements:

- A financial report that itemizes the expenditures of funds.

- A detailed description of the audience reached (number of attendees and nature of audience, e.g. producers, consumers, policymakers), with a particular emphasis on those individuals who may influence national biotech policy.

- Analysis on whether the program influenced public perceptions.

- Level of media coverage (and, if possible, the size of the audience serviced by media).

¶13. (U) SUBMISSION OF PROGRAM AND FUNDING REQUESTS: We urge post public diplomacy officers to consult with econ officers, ESTH officers, and Foreign Agricultural Service staff in crafting proposed projects prior to submission of requests. Posts are encouraged to send proposals for FY 09 ag-biotech projects to the Department not later than January 10, 2010. Projects received after that date will be considered based on available resources.

Requests should outline:

- The cost of the proposed program;
- The target audiences;
- The specific ag-biotech issues to be addressed;
- How the project would help meet USG policy objectives (purpose and impact);
- Proposed length of program;
- Whether posts wish to go through the IIP Speaker Program or arrange for speakers themselves; and
- Name of post responsible officer and contact information.

Please note: IIP will be sending separate messages to select posts soliciting proposals for speaker projects as funds become available from EEB.

¶14. (U) Program proposals will be reviewed by

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EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT. Please slug cables for EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT/ - Marcella Szymanski (szymanskimb@state.gov) and Jack Bobo (BoboJA@state.gov).

¶15. (U) EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT will work with posts to further develop promising proposals. Average size of program has been \$10,000-25,000, with some as small as \$500 and others as large as \$50,000.

¶16. (U) Funds may be used to pay for travel by participants or speakers to an international meeting or conference hosted by the USG in the United States or for travel by speakers from the United States to

another country. The funds can also be used to pay for speakers from neighboring countries or the region to speak at a host country event. EEB's Biotech Outreach funds come with a number of restrictions on how they can be used, so only certain types of projects are appropriate. Applicable restrictions include:

-- EEB funds cannot be used for International Visitor programs or to fund other travel by non-government employees (Invitational travel for non-USG employees is permitted as long as they will serve as a presenter or speaker);

-- Funds cannot be used for representational events or to provide food or beverages for receptions or meals unless the meal is an integral part of a biotech outreach event;

-- Funds cannot be provided as grants;

-- Funds cannot be provided as foreign assistance or for training purposes; and

-- Funds will need to be spent by the end of the fiscal year, i.e., September 30, 2010.

Background on Agricultural Biotechnology

¶17. (U) In the last twelve years more than 800 million hectares/2 billion acres of biotechnology crops have been planted around the world ? it took 10 years for the 1st billionth acre in 2005, but only 3 years for the 2nd billionth acre in 2008. In 2008, over two dozen countries grew biotechnology crops on more than 125 million hectares/309 million acres ? with three new countries added: Egypt, Burkina Faso and Bolivia. Ag-biotech growth continues even in Europe: five EU member states now grow biotech crops (Spain, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Romania).

¶18. (U) This is not just a technology for large agribusinesses. More than ninety percent of farmers benefiting from the technology are in the developing world. In 2008, some 12.3 million small and resource poor farmers in the developing world benefited from biotechnology crops. Biotech offers the potential to help developing countries attack the cycle of poverty, address food security needs, and improve farmers' lives and incomes. In India, conservative estimates for small scale farmers indicate that use of biotech cotton has increased yield by 31%, decreased insecticide application by 39%, and increased profitability by 88%, equivalent to \$250 US dollars per hectare. The increased income from biotech crops for small and resource-poor farmers represents an initial modest contribution toward the alleviation of their poverty. Scientists are developing new crops that resist drought and disease and provide health benefits to farmers and nutritional benefits to consumers, as well as ensure a reliable supply of staple crops for the developing world.

-- Food Security Benefits: Biotech crops can play an important role through increasing productivity per hectare while decreasing costs of production (by a reduced need for inputs, less plowing and fewer pesticide applications). Of significance is biotech rice, awaiting approval in China, which has the potential to benefit 250 million poor in Asia growing half a hectare of rice while living on \$1 U.S. dollar a day.

-- Environmental Benefits: Adoption of biotech crops has significantly reduced insecticide use (by an

estimated 359,000 metric tons of active ingredients from 1996-2007, a saving of 9% in pesticides), and has allowed many farmers to adopt no- or low-till farming practices, thereby reducing soil erosion and consumption of energy and water. Reduced use of pesticides in China (an estimated 60 percent reduction) has resulted in significant health benefits to Chinese cotton farmers, who previously suffered from exposure to dangerous and sometimes lethal levels of pesticides.

-- Mitigating Climate Change: Biotech crops help mitigate climate change in two ways. First, there are permanent savings in carbon dioxide (CO2) emission through reduced use of fossil-based fuels, associated with fewer insecticide and herbicide sprays. Second, additional savings from conservation tillage (need for less or no plowing facilitated by herbicide-tolerant biotech crops), leads to additional soil carbon sequestration. In 2007, the combined benefits from permanent savings and sequestration were equivalent to removing 6.3 million cars from the road.

-- Biofuels: Biotechnology can be used to cost-effectively optimize the productivity of first generation food/feed and fiber crops as well as second-generation energy crops (trees, sorghum, switchgrass).

¶19. (U) For additional informational materials (including fact sheets, remarks, and related links on ag-biotech) addressees should visit EEB's intranet page:
<http://eeb.e.state.sbu/sites/tpp/mtaa/default.aspx>. For additional information on the global status of commercialized biotech/GM crops see: ISAAA briefs at: www.isaaa.org .

¶20. Minimize considered.
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